

MEETING OF THE CORPORATION BOARD

MINUTES (Part one)

Date	Wednesday 27th March 2024
Time	17.45 to 20.30
Location	Vickers 102, Weybridge Campus
Present (Governors):	Professor Craig Mahoney (Chair) Jesse Adekoya Ian Carey (Staff Governor) Dr Andrew Gilchrist Fred Gray Adam Herriott Mary Hughes Hilary Omissi Jackie Pearson Christine Ricketts (Principal and Chief Executive) Paul Stedman
Officers and advisers In attendance	Sarah Clancey – Assistant Principal Education & Personal Development Lorne Richardson – Assistant Principal Curriculum Allan Tyrer – Chief Operating Officer Melissa Drayson - Director of Governance (DG) Karen Champion – Director of MIS and Exams (pre-Board briefing) Melissa Breedon – Head of Safeguarding (item)
Observers	Paul Mittendorfer – Department for Education Rob Lawson – External Board Reviewer
Apologies for absence	Daniela Clarkson Dr Andrew Gilchrist James Measures Judy Peck (Staff Governor) Louise Salmon
Quorum (8)	The meeting was quorate throughout

Item	Action lead
Pre-meeting briefing on the development of the live data dashboard <i>Presented by the Director of MIS and Exams</i> A live data dashboard had been developed to provide staff with a daily update across five key areas: attendance, retention, applications, on-course progress and predicted achievement. It was possible to drill	

down to course, and individual learner, level if required to gain more detailed insight.

Initial feedback from staff had been very positive.

Governors discussed the potential to develop the dashboard further to include further KPIs, including those relating to finance, course costs, and people, as well as breakdowns by EDI characteristics.

The Corporation welcomed the development and looked forward to receiving updates on its applications in the college and its impact. Unfortunately, it was not yet possible for governors to gain access to the dashboard externally, but the Director of MIS was working with IT to find a solution.

The Director of MIS was thanked for a clear and informative presentation.

1. Preliminary items

1.1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Apologies, as listed on page one, were received.

1.2 Declarations of interest

There were no new declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda. Previously declared interests were carried forward.

1.3 Urgent other business notified in advance

There would be an item at the end of the Part One agenda to recognise the contributions of departing governors.

2. Minutes

2.1 Minutes of the Corporation meeting on 14 December 2023

RESOLVED: That the Part 1 and Part 2 Minutes of 14 December be APPROVED as an accurate record, and confidential sections confirmed.

2.2 Matters arising and actions carried forward *Supporting paper by the Director of Governance*

Governors noted the completion of actions from previous meetings.

A verbal update was provided on how the ideas put forward by the Student Governor at the December meeting on enrichment had been taken forward. Several student-led clubs had now been set up, including football (including a women's football club), film, and LGBTQ+ groups.

3. Principal and CEO Report

Supporting paper and presentation by the Principal and CEO

Minutes of Corporation meeting (non confidential) on 27 March 2024 approved on 10 July 2024

3.1 Main report

The Principal and CEO presented a summary of recent key developments and an update on progress against each strategic aim, supported by data from the KPI dashboard. Key headlines were:

- Overall forecast study programme achievement rates were tracking below target and the previous year's actual figure. This was due to high numbers of 'red risk' learners being recorded by teachers. Forecast figures would be more accurate, and were expected to increase, when GCSE mock exam results and BTEC outcomes were known.
- Overall forecast achievement for apprenticeship programmes was in line with 2022-23 and well above National Rates.
- Attendance continued to be an area of focus with the current overall attendance rate at 80.2%. Work continued to support students with lower attendance rates who were at risk of not completing their programmes. Attendance for GCSE in comparison with the main programme continued to be a critical issue with a gap of 14.8%.
- Several governors attended the Teaching & Learning Day in March. Governors commented that the experience gave them a valuable insight into the quality of teaching & learning on the Weybridge campus.
- The reorganisation process was launched in January and concluded on 11 March 2024. The new organisation structure was included in the appendices.
- A middle management training programme would be launched in May, delivered by FE Associates in partnership with the Education Training Foundation (ETF). The programme had six core modules and would be delivered by experts in the sector.
- It was expected that Section 106 would be passed for final signature within the next two weeks.
- The surplus for the year to date and the forecast surplus for the whole year currently stood at £432K.

Governors noted that a County Deal for Surrey had been confirmed in the Budget on 6 March 2024. As an outcome, the adult budget and funding for Free Courses for Jobs would be devolved to Surrey County Council (SCC). The Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) would be integrated into the Borough Councils. The adult budget would be fully devolved from 2026/27 subject to readiness conditions and parliamentary approval. Transitional arrangements for funding would be in place for 2024/25 and 2025/26. As part of this work, the boundaries of the LSIP (Local Skills Improvement Plan) would be reviewed.

Governors were updated on college involvement in local collaboration and partnerships, with a positive impact on the College, including;

- The receipt of Skills Development funding (SDF) and Local Skills Improvement Funding (LSIF) of over £1m arising from a Surrey and Hampshire Colleges joint bid with the Local Enterprise

Partnership (LEP) for capital investment, professional development and training.

- The development of SurreyFE by the four FE Colleges to drive forward the strategic intention to deliver the local, regional and national targets, for 16-18 education and training, Apprenticeships, Higher Education and Adult Training and upskilling, in the county and supporting areas.
- The College had instigated a meeting with the FEC and ESFA (Education Skills Funding Agency) to discuss the next steps for the College. A presentation was shared that outlined the College's journey over the five years of intervention and, the progress made.
- The Principal and CEO had invited the FE Commissioner Shelagh Legrave and Alan Krikorian ESFA Deputy Director: London, South East and East Anglia Place Based Team, to visit the College and this was planned for 8 May 2024.

Governors discussed the potential impact of devolution in depth, and agreed on the importance of Colleges driving the transition. It was agreed that more information on the future of Surrey County Council adult education centres should be sought. The Principal confirmed that SurreyFE would be following this up. The suggestion that the Colleges might combine to jointly fund a post was supported.

The Corporation noted and supported the proposed timescale and arrangements for the production and approval of the 2024-25 Accountability Statement. A presentation would be brought to the next Governors Strategy Session on 24 April on how the College was meeting local skills needs. Final approval would be sought via Written Resolution before the 30th June publication deadline. Jackie Pearson and Hilary Omissi agreed to continue to support the process in the meantime.

Further to the deferral of a decision to March on the award of the remainder of the 6.5% staff pay rise, assurance was provided that this was affordable and the areas of potential risk (adult income and agency spend) had now been mitigated. An update on the new management structure was noted.

Following the presentation and workshop at the January Strategy Session on brand identity, the Corporation considered a proposal to adopt 'Brooklands Technical College' as the trading name of the College. It was confirmed that this did not constitute a legal name change so did not require DfE approval. The ESFA had, however, been notified and had raised no objections.

RESOLVED:

- That the process for developing the Accountability Statement, and seeking Corporation approval via written resolution be APPROVED:**

- ii) That the remaining element of the pay award (to make the total up to 6.5%) be **APPROVED** and backdated to 1st February
- iii) That the proposal to change the trading name of the College to **Brooklands Technical College** be **APPROVED**, to trigger the next stage of development of the new 'brand identity'.

AGREED: That the **Director of Governance** should be added to the organogram

4 Curriculum, Quality and the Learner Experience

4.1 Teaching and Learning Committee report

Supporting papers presented by the Chair of TLC

It was noted that several of the headlines had been covered in the Principal and CEO report. There was support for the new strategic partnership with London South Bank University to provide pathways into Higher Education.

An update was provided that the Student Governor had been a great asset in supporting the College with school visits.

4.2 Student Governor report

In the absence of the Student Governor, this item was not taken but the earlier updates were noted.

4.3 Learner Voice Committee development

Verbal update by the Director of Governance

The development of the new student voice committee had been delayed by staff turnover. The Corporation restated its commitment to strengthening engagement with students.

5. Safeguarding Report

Presentation by the Head of Safeguarding

Governors were provided with an update on the previously circulated slides. These covered:

- Changes to the Safeguarding and Support Team, including a vacancy for a safeguarding and wellbeing officer
- The development of the Mental Health first-aider team
- Work to date with East to West charity which would, unfortunately, now cease due to increased costs.
- An increase in student counsellor hours through the addition of trainee counsellors.
- All staff Suicide Prevention Training, taken up by 118 staff, with enhanced training for 32 Mental Health First Aiders and progress coaches.
- Staff CPD, refresher training and student tutorial on Safeguarding, Prevent and British Values. Student tutorials also cover EDI, online safety, consent and sexual health. New trends are identified and covered in tutorials.

- Enrichment groups, e.g. young carers, Looked after Children and LGBTQI+
- External agency pop-ups and pop-ins, including collaborative working with Surrey Policy to provide a drop in on Violence against Women and Girls
- A rise in the number of transactions on 'My Concern' so far this year, and the numbers of referrals since the same point in 2023, with year-on-year increases since pre-pandemic levels.
- Open cases relating to students deemed at high-risk
- Numbers of serious incidents. Of the two LADO referrals, once had been closed.

In response to governors' questions, it was confirmed that:

- The college would continue to work hard with schools to ensure that student files were provided promptly, and that transition to college was well managed.
- The VAWG event with Surrey Policy had been attended by both male and female students and would be repeated at Ashford Campus
- There were many reasons why the number of safeguarding referrals had risen. This was partly due to the pressure on families and young people, but also reflected a greater awareness of the safeguarding and wellbeing team.

Governors commended the range of developments and initiatives to support students and expressed the hope that these would impact positively on attendance and retention.

The Head of Safeguarding was thanked for her report.

6. **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion update**

Supporting paper presented by the Principal and CEO

The Corporation was updated on recent developments including the work of the new EDI Committee. Governor representation on the Committee was requested. A set of draft EDI objectives would be developed over the Summer term by the Committee and brought back to the Corporation for approval in July.

The format and initial headlines relating to 16-18 achievement were noted. These showed that students with SEN and High Needs had achieved significantly better than the average, but that students receiving Free Schools Meals achieved slightly less well (-2pp). Female students' achievement was 3.2% worse than male. There were no significant differences in achievement between White British students and Asian students, as the second largest ethnic group.

Gender pay gap data showed an increased gap between men's and women's pay in the most recent year of reporting, compared to a decrease in the public sector and education sectors as a whole.

Governors recognised that EDI was a huge area, that should run through all college activities rather than as a standalone initiative.

AGREED: That Adam Herriott and Jesse Adekoya be appointed as EDI governor champions.

7. Finance and Resources: reports and recommendations from the F&R Committee meetings on 8 February and 13 March 2024
Supporting papers presented by the Chair of F&R, including January Management accounts

The Committee noted the headlines from both meetings, summarised in the cover sheet. Of particular note were:

- The December and January Management accounts showed a stable picture with the College achieving a year-end surplus.
- The Committee supported the assumptions behind the draft three-to-five-year plan
- The financial regulations would be updated during the summer to comply with the new DFE College Financial Handbook. This would include a review of procurement approval thresholds.
- Several recommendations had been approved by written resolution after the meeting including:
 - The appointment of Bislie Construction to undertake the LSIF-funded green technologies refurbishment
 - Delegated authority to the Chief Operating Officer to approve a new electricity contract
- Agreement that future capital tenders would be sought by written resolution if required between meetings

RESOLVED: That the following recommendations of the Finance and Resources Committee be APPROVED

- to retain the dormant subsidiary company, Brooklands Enterprises Ltd and to appoint Allan Tyrer and Hilary Omissi as directors
- To APPROVE the Fees Policy 2024-25
- To APPROVE the Treasury Management Policy 2024

8. Estates and facilities

8.1 Estates project update
Supporting paper by Fusion

It was noted that the Fusion report had been considered in detail at the March F&R Committee meeting. The Chief Operating Officer updated the Corporation that the revised designs had been agreed. Project cashflow had been reviewed and this would be positive throughout the project. Successful negotiations had been held with Cala about alternative car-parking space once they took possession of the site.

8.2 Ashford tender approval
Supporting paper presented by the Chief Operating Officer

Fusion had undertaken a robust tender process for the T Level Wave 5 works to create four new electrical workshops at the Ashford campus. The tender analysis recommended GTCL as the lowest-priced and higher-scoring bidder. The price quoted was £157k plus VAT below the

budget available within the grant agreement. This amount would be held as a contingency for the project.

RESOLVED: That GTCI be appointed to undertake the Ashford T-Level refurbishment project.

9. Audit and Risk

9.1 Report and recommendations of the Audit and Risk Committee on 28 February 2024

Supporting papers presented by the Chair of the A&R Committee

The Corporation noted the headlines reported from the Audit and Risk Committee meeting. The reasons behind the proposal to appoint Buzzacott for a further year as external auditors were accepted, but it was agreed that external audit must be retendered next year.

It was confirmed that TIAA's contract allowed reappointment for a further year, twice, after the end of the initial three-year period.

RESOLVED: that the following recommendations of the Audit and Risk Committee be APPROVED:

- i) **That Buzzacott be reappointed for a further year to undertake the 2023-24 financial statements and regularity audit**
- ii) **That TIAA be appointed for a further year to provide internal audit services during 2024-25**

9.2 Corporate Risk Register

The most recent risk register was noted. This had been reviewed in more detail by the Audit and Risk Committee. Next steps would be for the Executive Team to undertake a comprehensive refresh to reduce the number of risks. Sections relating to the planning application would be removed.

10. Governance and nominations

10.1 Report and recommendations of Governance, Nominations and Remuneration Committee (non-confidential)

The Corporation was advised that the college had been accepted for DfE support to recruit three new governors to fill the vacancies for Vice Chair, Chair of Finance and Resources committee and a further independent governor.

The timeline for the conclusion of the External Governance Review was noted.

RESOLVED: That the following be approved at the recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee:

- a) **Role description for the Senior Independent Governor**
- b) **Committee Terms of Reference to reflect the new Committee structure**

c) Revised Scheme of Delegation to reflect the new Committee structure.

11 Urgent Other Business

There was no other business. The Chair reiterated thanks and congratulations to all colleagues for a challenging but ultimately rewarding term.

12 Dates of forthcoming meetings
10th July at 17:30 at the Weybridge Campus

Signed: (Chair)

Date: